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C O N F I D E N T I A L YEREVAN 000295

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DEPT FOR EUR/CARC, EUR/PRA, ISN/RA, AND NEA/ARPI

E.O. 12958: DECL: 03/01/2016

TAGS: [KNNP](#) [ENRG](#) [PARM](#) [PREL](#) [IR](#) [RS](#) [AM](#)

SUBJECT: ARMENIA: ANXIOUS NOT TO CONFRONT IRAN ON NUCLEAR
REACTORS, CONSIDERING NEXT STEPS

REF: A) STATE 31059 B) YEREVAN 281 C) YEREVAN 213

Classified By: Amb. John M. Evans for reasons 1.4 (b, d).

11. (C) The Ambassador delivered ref A points regarding Iran's application for membership in the Association of State Nuclear Authorities of Countries Operating VVER-type Reactors during separate calls on Energy Minister Armen Movsisyan and Deputy Foreign Minister Arman Kirakossian February 28. Sitting in with Kirakossian, MFA Arms Control and International Security Advisor Vartuhi Asaturian told the Ambassador that the GOAM would wait to decide on Armenia's next steps until the results of the March 6 IAEA meeting and subsequent action, if any, the United Nations Security Council would take. Kirakossian (again) explained that association members had agreed to invite Iran to participate in the June 2006 meeting well in advance of Armenia's chairmanship (ref C), placing the GOAM in a difficult position. Kirakossian added that both China (which is party to the Nonproliferation Treaty and operates "one or more" VVER reactors) and India (which has neither signed the NPT nor currently operates VVER reactors) have also applied for membership, complicating efforts to single out Iran.

12. (C) Minister of Energy Armen Movsisyan, one of President Robert Kocharian's chief negotiators on energy issues with Iran (ref B), did not offer immediate reaction to the Ambassador's request beyond noting Armenia's "strategic interest" in maintaining solid relations with energy-rich Iran.

COMMENT: DEMARCHE MAY FORCE ARMENIA'S HAND

13. (C) With Russian and U.S. opposition to Iran's membership on the one hand, and the GOAM's courtship of Iranian energy supplies and investment on the other, the GOAM has put itself in a difficult position. Though we will continue to push, our GOAM interlocutors tell us they prefer to follow consensus on contentious issues. We do not expect the GOAM to lead the charge against Iran's membership, but we believe that active lobbying against Iran by other member states may provide the GOAM some political cover to avoid confrontation.
EVANS